REMARKS

Claims 1-48 were presented at the time of filing; claims 1-48 are currently pending in the application. The Action of January 4, 2007 requires election under 35 U.S.C. §121 between eight groups of claims:

Group I (claims 1-13), drawn to a method of inhibiting inflammation in a subject in need thereof, comprising contacting cells of the subject with an active agent that induces up-regulation of RUNX3 expression in the cells, wherein the active agent comprises a polynucleotide encoding Runx3.

Group II (claims 1-13), drawn to a method of inhibiting inflammation in a subject in need thereof, comprising contacting cells of the subject with an active agent that induces up-regulation of RUNX3 expression in the cells, wherein the active agent comprises a polynucleotide encoding Runx3 promoter activator.

Group III (claims 14-20), drawn to a method for enhancing T cell-mediated immune response in a subject in need thereof, comprising contacting cells with an active agent that down-regulates the expression of RUNX3 in cells, thereby enhancing the T cell-mediated immune response.

Group IV (claims 21-28), drawn to a method of testing the efficacy of a treatment for a chronic inflammatory disease comparing subjecting a mouse that is homozygous for a RUNX3 null allele to a putative treatment and determining the efficacy of said treatment by measuring the severity of symptoms characteristic of said disease exhibited by said mouse, in comparison to the severity of symptoms exhibited by the same mice not exposed to the treatment.

Group V (claims 29-38), drawn to a method of predicting an increased risk for a chronic inflammatory disease in a subject comparing the steps of: (a) obtaining a test sample from the subject to be assessed; and (b) determining the expression of RUNX3 in the sample, wherein when the expression of RUNX3 in said test sample is diminished compared to normal levels expressed in healthy subjects, said subject has an increased risk of susceptibility to a chronic inflammatory disease.

Group VI (claims 39-43), drawn to method of testing the efficacy of a treatment for a chronic inflammatory disease comprising subjecting cells derived from a knock out mouse that is homozygous for a RUNX3 null allele to a putative treatment in vitro and determining the efficacy of said treatment.

Group VII (claims 44-45), drawn to a kit for diagnosis of genetic susceptibility to a chronic inflammatory disease comprising at least one probe capable of determining at least one genotype associated with the RUNX3 gene, or the expression of the gene product encoded by this locus.

Group VIII (claims 46-48), drawn to a pharmaceutical composition comprising a polynucleotide construct encoding RUNX3 or RUNX3 promoter activator.

Applicants hereby elect the claims of Group I (claims 1-13) with traverse.

The requirement for unity of invention is fulfilled for a group of inventions that are so linked as to form a single general inventive concept. The claims of Group VIII are drawn to a pharmaceutical composition comprising a polynucleotide construct encoding a RUNX3 or RUNX3 promoter activator. Applicants believe that these claims are directly related to claims of Groups I and II, which are drawn to a method for the treatment using an agent which up-regulates RUNX3 expression. Applicants therefore kindly request, that these claims be rejoined to the claims of Group I.

Furthermore, the claims of Groups I and II are related in that they are both directed to a method for up-regulating RUNX3 expression in cells. Applicants, therefore, kindly request that these claims be rejoined to the claims of Group I.

Lastly, Applicants believe that Groups V and VII are related in that they are drawn to a diagnostic method and a diagnostic kit for use in conjunction with the claimed method.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' Attorney at the telephone number given below if any further questions arise in connection with this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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